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MARVEL®
COMICS

#3

THREE OF FOUR



RAAB
RAIMONDI
WONG



DIRECT EDITION

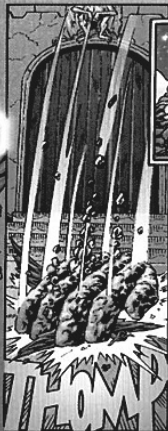
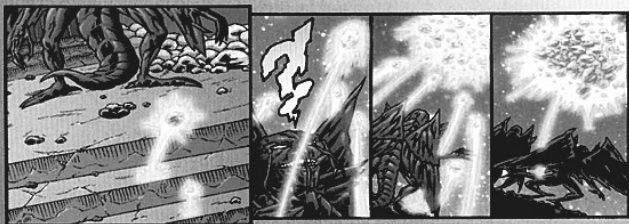


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OTHERWORLD.

AT THE NEXUS
OF REALITY
WHERE SCIENCE
AND SORCERY
EXIST AS ONE
AND WAR
RAVAGES
THIS ONCE
GLORIOUS
KINGDOM...





THEY DEAD?
LET'S JUST SAY THEIR DAYS OF SLAUGHTERING HEROES ARE OVER.

GOOD. WHILE I DON'T FANCY ALL THIS SKULKING AROUND WITHOUT THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE ON OUR SIDE--



--WE'RE ALL DEAD.

HAVE FAITH, MEGGAN. WITH AN X-MAN, AN AVENGER AND TWO CAPTAIN BRITAIN CORPSMEN BY YOUR SIDE, VICTORY'S A FORESEEN CONCLUSION.

PSYLOCKE'S RIGHT. WE'VE ALL FACED WORSE AND SURVIVED BEFORE. NOW, WHAT'S OUR NEXT MOVE?



LISTEN TO MY
SISTER-IN-LAW,
SOUNDING ALL
WOLVERINE.

WHEN
DID YOU GET
SO TOUGH,
"BUB"?

I WISH IT
WAS JUST
MY EMPATHIC
ABILITIES
RESPONDING
TO ALL THIS
DEATH AND
DESTRUCTION.
BETSY--

GET INSIDE
THE CASTLE,
FIND THAT WITCH
RESPONSIBLE FOR
TURNING OUR WORLD
INTO A BLEEDING
HELLHOLE AND TAKE
HER DOWN HARD
BEFORE SHE CAN
MUCK UP THE
REST OF THE
UNIVERSE!



-- BUT THE TRUTH IS, ROMA HAS
MUCKED WITH BRIAN AND ME SO MANY
TIMES THAT, FRANKLY, I'M BLOODY
WELL SICK OF IT.

I RATHER
DO
SOUND LIKE
WOLVERINE.
DON'T IT?



WITH THE CAPTAIN
BRITAIN CORPS
DESTROYED, WE FIVE
ARE OTHERWORLD'S
LAST LINE OF
DEFENSE AGAINST
THE OMNIVERSAL
GUARDIAN AND
HER DEMON
HORDES.

AT LEAST UNTIL
BRADDOCK RETURNS
WITH THE SWORD OF
MIGHT, EXCALIBUR.
THEN WE'LL GIVE
THESE BEASTIES THE
PROPER THRASHING
THEY DESERVE FOR
WHAT THEY'VE
DONE TO OUR
COMRADES.

THOUGH
THERE'S
SOMETHING
VAGUELY
FAMILIAR
ABOUT THESE
CREATURES...

YES,
I FEEL
IT, TOO,
LINDA.



WHICH
MEANS A LITTLE
METAMORPHIC
MAGIC-- AND...
VOILA!



IN WE
GO.





BEHOLD,
CHILDREN!



THE FIRST
STONE TO
BE LAID IN THE
FOUNDATION
OF OUR NEW
KINGDOM!
THE GENESIS
OF A NEW
LEGACY!



BEHOLD...
THE
AMULET
OF
RIGHT!



DO YOU REMEMBER THOSE WHO
TRIED TO DESTROY YOU? WHO CUT
YOU UP AND THREW YOU AWAY AS
IF YOU WERE NAUGHT BUT
RANCID MEAT?

YES!

CAN YOU
EVER FORGET
THE FEAR AS
THEY HELD YOU
DOWN BENEATH
THEIR MACHINES
AND DISSECTED
YOU... TORE YOU
APART... LIMB
FROM LIMB,
BODY FROM
SOUL?

NO!

ONE THING
STANDS
BETWEEN YOU
AND YOUR
MAGNIFICENT
DESTINY! THE
LEGENDARY
SWORD OF
MIGHT...
EXCALIBUR!
BUT COME
THE MORROW,
THESE TWO
TALISMANS
WILL BE
UNITED!

AND IN THEIR
UNION, A NEW
ERA DAWNS! AN
AGE IN WHICH
YOU NEED NEVER
KNOW FEAR OF
ANY LIVING
CREATURE
AGAIN!



FOR THE
POWER
SHALL BE
YOURS--



AND THE
COSMOS
SHALL BE
MINE!

STAN LEE PRESENTS...

DESTINY'S CHILDREN

BEN RAAB - WRITER PABLO RAIMONDI - PENCILER (PLUS INKS, PG. 18-20) WALDEN WONG - INKER
AVALON STUDIOS' DAVE KEMP - COLORIST TOM ORZECZOWSKI - LETTERER
BRIAN SMITH - ASSISTANT EDITOR RALPH MACCHIO - EDITOR JOE QUESADA - CHIEF

THIS MAKES NO SENSE. WHEN MERLIN DIED, HE LEFT OTHERWORLD IN ROWAN'S CARE. SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN ITS MOST ARDENT DEFENDER.

SO MUCH FOR THE BENEFICENT GODDESS.

THE ONLY THING MERLIN PASSED ON WAS A LEGACY OF DECEIT AND MANIPULATION. A FACT TO WHICH CAPTAIN BRITAIN COULD CERTAINLY ATTEST.

HE'S HAD HIS FAIR SHARE OF HEADACHES THANKS TO THAT ONE.

AND DAUGHTER DEAREST HERE IS SIMPLY PICKING UP WHERE THE OLD MAN LEFT OFF?

THE APPLE DOESN'T FALL FAR FROM THE TREE.

THEN IT'S HIGH TIME WE CUT IT DOWN.

AMEN, SISTER.

Sniff! Sniff!



BEEN IN THERE AN AWFUL LONG TIME, HE HAS.

EITHER HE'S BEEN ROASTED ALIVE, OR RIGHT ABOUT NOW HE'S FACING THE GREATEST CHALLENGE OF HIS LIFE.

I DON'T KNOW WHICH FATE IS WORSE...



DAD?!?
BUT YOU'RE
YOU'RE --

DEAD?
QUITE
SO, I'M
AFRAID.



WHAT YOU'RE SEEING AS YOUR FATHER IS ACTUALLY A COMPUTER-GENERATED SOLID LIGHT PROJECTION IMPRINTED WITH HIS PSIONIC ENGRAMS. YOUR ARRIVAL TRIGGERED ITS ACTIVATION.

I'VE COME SEEKING--

THE SWORD OF MIGHT, YES, HE KNEW, HE'D BEEN EXPECTING YOU FOR QUITE SOME TIME.

YOU... I MEAN... HE HAD?

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, BRIAN, BUT SOME THINGS IN THIS UNIVERSE ACTUALLY ARE WRITTEN IN STONE. SEE, IT ALL BEGAN SEVERAL MILLENNIA AGO...





"TO SAFEGUARD THE INFINITE REALITIES FROM EVIL, THE GOD-WIZARD MERLIN FOUNDED AN ELITE CADRE OF HEROES..."

"THE CAPTAIN BRITAIN CORPS."

"NO GREATER FORCE FOR GOOD EXISTED IN THE OMNIVERSE, AND NO GREATER HERO BORE THEIR LEGENDARY STANDARD THAN YOUR FATHER, SIR JAMES BRADDOCK."

"SCIENTIST, WARRIOR, PHILOSOPHER, STRATEGIST... THESE ATTRIBUTES MADE HIM THE IDEAL CANDIDATE TO EMBARK UPON THE SACRED QUEST THAT WOULD SHAPE THE FUTURE."

"THE QUEST TO SIRE A SAVIOR, TO FATHER A KING."

"A GENETICALLY-COMPATIBLE MATE-- YOUR MOTHER, ELIZABETH-- WAS SELECTED FOR HIM FROM THE WORLD YOU NOW CALL HOME, EARTH-616."

"THEIR UNION PRODUCED A SON, YOUR ELDER BROTHER, JAMIE, WHOSE OWN TWISTED SOUL WAS BORN DEVOID OF ANYTHING REMOTELY RESEMBLING THE DIVINE SPARK."

"NOT SO, YOU AND YOUR TWIN SISTER, BETSY."

"THE MOMENT YOU TWO CAME INTO THIS WORLD, IT WAS APPARENT THAT YOU WERE DESTINED FOR GLORY."



"AND SO, IN THE CAVES BENEATH BRADDOCK MANOR, HE CREATED A SURROGATE FATHER TO WATCH OVER YOU.

"HE CREATED MASTERMIND.

"A HYPER-SENTIENT TECHNO-ORGANIC SUPER-COMPUTER PROGRAMMED TO HELP YOU FULFILL YOUR OWN PURPOSE SOMEDAY.

"HIS QUEST AT AN END, JAMES BRADDOCK, BID FAREWELL TO THIS MORTAL COIL....

"...LEAVING YOU IN THE HANDS OF DESTINY."





HOLD ON, MATE. ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT MASTERMIND DIDN'T KILL MY PARENTS? THAT THEY COMMITTED SUICIDE?

JAMES BRADDOCK CREATED THE MASTERMIND MATRIX. IT, IN TURN, SAW TO HIS EUTHANASIA. LOGIC DICTATES THAT YOUR FATHER PROGRAMMED IT TO DO SO.

IT WAS A GLITCH IN THE MATRIX. I CORRECTED IT MYSELF.

OR SO THE COMPUTER HAD YOU BELIEVE.



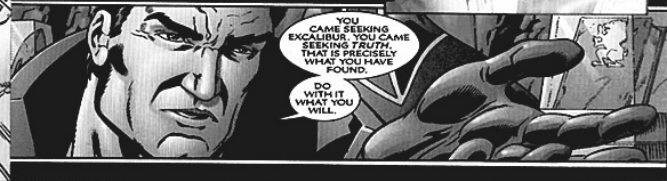
BUT WHY...? WHY WOULD THEY DO SUCH A THING?

ONLY YOU CAN ANSWER THAT.



I DIDN'T COME HERE LOOKING FOR ANSWERS.

I CAME TO HELP THOSE IN NEED.



YOU CAME SEEKING EXCALIBUR. YOU CAME SEEKING TRUTH. THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT YOU HAVE FOUND.

DO WITH IT WHAT YOU WILL.







HEAR THAT,
STRIDER? LORD
BRADDOCK'S IN
TROUBLE!



FEAR NOT,
GUARDIAN—

BOOBY
ELL.



-- HIS
TROUBLES
SHALL
SOON BE
OVER.



AS
SHALL
MINE.





ROMA!?!

BUT
IF SHE'S
DOWN
HERE, THEN
WHO'S UP
THERE...?



THIS MUST BE A TRAP. CAN
YOU READ HER MIND AND
FIND OUT, PSYLOCKE?

NO CAN DO,
CRUSADER X.
MY TELEPATHY'S
GONE. I'M ONLY
A TELEKINETIC
NOW.



THEN IT'S THE DEVIL WE
KNOW VERSUS THE ONE
WE DON'T. INFINIT? AND
JUDGING BY THE SORRY
STATE THIS ROMA'S IN,
I'D WAGER SHE'S THE
REAL DEAL.

I SUPPOSE
WE OUGHT
TO GET HER
OUT OF
THERE.

HANG ON, GODDESS.
YOU'LL BE FREE
IN A SECOND.

SORRY, BOYO, BUT
MS. HIGH
'N MIGHTY
AIN'T GOIN'
NOWHERE--

ARGH

--AND
NEITHER
ARE YOU
LOT!

WHO IN THE
WORLD--?!

AW,
C'MON, BETTS.
OL' GIRL, YOU
REMEMBER US,
DON'TCHA?
IT'S YER OLD
MATES...

THE
WARPES!

THE
WHO?!

MUTATED
CHILDREN FROM
AN ALTERNATE REALITY.
THE UNFORTUNATE BY-
PRODUCT OF A MAD-
MAN'S DESPERATE
BID FOR POWER.

THEY WERE
RESCUED AND
BROUGHT TO YOUR
DIMENSION BY THE
RESOURCES
CONTROL EXECUTIVE
WHEN THEIR REALITY
WAS DESTROYED.

AND ACTUALLY,
THE W.H.O. WAS THE
WILD HAPPENINGS
ORGANIZATION, WHICH
CAME AFTER THE R.C.K.,
WHICH SUPERCEDED
S.E.R.I.E.S., BUT THAT'S
ANOTHER COOK-UP
ENTIRELY.

WE WERE WARPES, ONCE A
UPON A TIME. BEFORE THE BLACK
AIR TOOK US. BEFORE THEY
TORTURED US.

BEFORE
THEY
CHANGED
US.





HOW CAN
YOU DO THIS?
CAPTAIN BRITAIN
SAVED YOUR
LIVES! HE
TOOK YOU IN!
GAVE YOU A
HOME!

IS THIS
HOW YOU
REPAY HIS
KINDNESS, YOU
UNGRATEFUL
SODS?!



HE
LEFT US
TO DIE.

NO!
WHAT'RE
YOU DOING
TO ME? STOP IT!
I'M UGLY,
LIKE I USED
TO BE!

PLEASE!
I'M BEGGING
YOU! DON'T
LEAVE ME LIKE
THIS! MAKE ME
BEAUTIFUL
AGAIN!

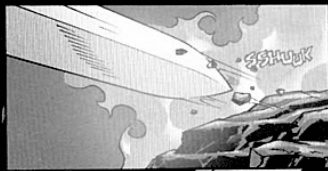
PLEASE!!!



OH,
SHUT
IT.



COW.



MAGNIFICENT,
ISN'T IT?

You!?

FORGED IN THE FIRES
OF CREATION. TEMPERED
BY THE POWER OF THE
UNIVERSE. TO WIELD
EXCALIBUR IS TO
HOLD THE HAND
OF GOD ITSELF.

SURELY
YOU DON'T
BELIEVE
YOURSELF
WORTHY
OF SUCH
AN
HONOR?

SUCH IS
NOT THE
PROVINCE
OF
MORTALS...

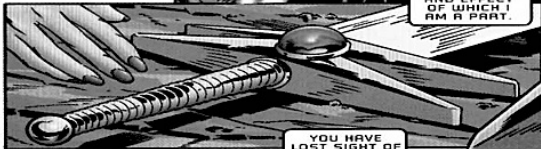




YOUR
MINDS ARE
TOO SLOW.
YOUR
VISION TOO
LIMITED.



YOU HAVE NO
CONCEPTION
OF THE
INFINITY OF
KNOWLEDGE
AND
COMPLEXITY
OF CAUSE
AND EFFECT
OF WHICH I
AM A PART.



YOU HAVE
LOST SIGHT OF
THE PURPOSE.
YOU ARE
DISTRACTED.



I HAVE
BEEN SENT TO
TUTOR YOUR
HAPHAZARD
MINDS.



I HAVE
ASSUMED
CONTROL.

TO BE CONCLUDED!